



"O, HO!" said Johnnie Jimplecute and laughed in childish glee.

"The glorious Fourth is bound to be a bully day for me. For Uncle John has given me this, and e'er the sun goes down

I'll have the biggest cracker in the whole of Gotham town."

And the wind soured low, And the sun shone bright, And the sun sang merrily, A rare brave sight to see, But a braver sight was the daring boy as he laughed in childish glee.

"Ho, ha!" said Johnnie Jimplecute as home he proudly bore. The very biggest cracker he had ever seen before. That cracker was a monster, the wonder of its kind. And warranted to make a flash would strike an army blind.

And the sun shone bright, And the wind soured low, And John sang merrily, As home he trudged in the glad sunshine and laughed in childish glee.

"Ho, he!" said Willie Winkelbaum and slyly wagged his head. As he and several other boys crept up with stealthy tread. And lit the white gunpowder fuse that fluttered in the air. Then stood aloof and watched it burn without a thought or care.

And the wind soured low, And the sun shone bright, And the fuse burned steadily, While on and on marched sturdily John and laughed in childish glee.

"Hi, hi!" yelled Willie Winkelbaum and laughed with childish glee. As the tiny spark crept softly up, a growling sight to see. It sizzled here, it sizzled there, and then to run was soon.

Its devastating course into the powder magazine. And the sun shone bright, And the wind soured low, And the world was fair to see, And Johnnie unsuspecting trudged—a simple lad was he.

And now upon the happy world there falls a bitter night, And even Willie Winkelbaum is saddened with the sight. For now that spark has disappeared—an instant—and a flash! And little Johnnie Jimplecute's converted into ash.

And the wind soured low, And the sun shone bright, And a white-robed boy is he, For Johnnie and his firecracker are but a memory.

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"Which I fear it'll never do. You know Bunker claims Noah Jackson, the man to which you paid your money, didn't have no real title to the property, an' the judge told you you'd have to look to Jackson to get your rights."

"That's fudger! How'm I goin' to look to Jackson when nobody knows where on the face of the earth Jackson's gone to? Besides that, if this new evidence 'mounts to anything, Bunker was in league with Jackson an' the place b'long's to me. I tell ya, I feel good enough to celebrate a little myself, an' I'm goin' to see the boys have a good time. You hain't got no patriotism in ya, mother. The Fourth of July oughter be celebrated by ev'rybody in this great an' glorious country ev'ry time it comes round. Now don't make no more talk about it," he cautioned as he saw his wife was about to speak again. "It's no use talkin', for I have sent for the fireworks, an' they'll sure be here tonight, so the boys can shoot 'em off tomorrow night, an' that settles it."

With that he arose and marched out of the house, leaving Mrs. Stone to her knitting and her thoughts.

"S'pose Elisha thinks he's goin' to celebrate the Fourth," she murmured, "but it'll really be celebratin' because he thinks he's goin' to get the best of Bunker at last. Well, mebbe he will, but I dunno's Bunker's so much to blame, for he did make it look pretty clear he had a prior claim to the place. My opinion is that Jackson is the rascal, else he'd never run away the way he did, but there's no use sayin' so to Elisha, he's so set."

That night at dusk Lizzie Stone slipped out by the back door and stole away down the lane that led to the pasture. Her manner betrayed the fact that she feared being seen by some of the family, for she paused several times and looked back nervously over her shoulder.

Lizzie was a pretty girl, bright and rather talented, but not without a touch of the romantic and frivolous in her nature. This, however, would disappear in later years when she came to understand life as it really is, and, for the time being, it made her seem all the more attractive to the young men who knew her.

Of all those young men there was but one for whom she really and truly cared, and that one she met at the foot of the lane, which Elisha Stone had laid out in genuine New England fashion, much to the wonder and amusement of his western neighbors. He was leaning on the fence and waiting for her as she approached.

"Lizzie, I feared you would not come!" he exclaimed, reaching over and clasping her hands, while she saw his eyes gleam through the murk with a light that set her heart fluttering and her pulses throbbing.

"I had to steal away," she replied, in a low tone, feeling that her cheeks were burning. "If father'd seen me—"

"I should not have had that pleasure. Thank fortune he did not see you! It is a cruel fate that makes our families foes, while we love each other, for you cannot deny you love me, sweetheart."

He drew her closer, and one arm slipped about her shoulders. She struggled and remonstrated a little, but she soon stood with bent head listening to his impulsive declaration of love.

"If I were a scoundrel," he said, "I might try to induce you to run away with me, but I mean to win you by fair means, and win you I will!"

"Father!"

"I know, sweetheart, but say you will marry me, and I will find some way to obtain his consent. I will go to him tomorrow and ask for you."

"No, no! That would ruin all! You don't know my father! He is so stern and

settled. He has forbidden me ever speaking to you again, and if he were to know I met you here there would be serious trouble."

"Still, my only way is to go to him like a man and ask for you. Then, if he refuses, I must find some way to overcome his opposition. Say you love me, Lizzie—say you will marry me—give me liberty to ask him for you!"

"It would be worse than folly, for you are Dick Bunker, the son of the man father considers his worst enemy."

"My father is not your father's enemy. In truth, father is very sorry Mr. Stone was swindled by Jackson, and he says he would willingly spend money and time to bring the rascal to justice."

"Ah, but you could not convince father this is true if you tried a year. He believes your father and Jackson were leagued together to swindle him—it is on that ground he is trying to bring the case into court again. He feels certain of obtaining a new trial and winning. Why, he feels so good over it that he is going to celebrate the Fourth with fireworks tomorrow night. He sent to town for them, and they came in a big box this afternoon."

Dick Bunker shook his head. "He is celebrating too soon, if he is spending his enthusiasm because he feels sure of victory and not from a patriotic motive. Father's title is clear, and a new trial will simply mean further expense for Mr. Stone with certain defeat in the end."

"He will fight as long as he can, and the result must make him more set against you. Oh, Dick, what can we do?"

"Trust to me and keep a brave heart, my girl. It must come out right at last. Give me liberty to ask him for you. I will do so tomorrow. What if I am refused? It is the right and proper way for me to do."

And thus he urged her till she finally consented, although she did so with the utmost reluctance.

"What is that odd smell in the air?" he asked, with uplifted head. "I have noticed it every time there was the slightest breeze."

"It must be the old well father spent so much money on. It gives out a singular smell."

"It seemed more like a rank pipe, but it may have come from the well."

"I must go now," declared Lizzie in sudden alarm. "I have staid too long al-



ready. There would be a terrible scrape were I missed."

He suddenly drew her close and kissed her across the rails. It was well they were so absorbed by the delight of the moment that they did not observe a suppressed agitation beyond the scrub bushes that ran down by the lane fence.

When the lovers had departed and disappeared in the darkness, a man arose from behind those bushes.

"So my girl meets that young rascal like this, an' he makes love to her!" snarled a voice that plainly belonged to Elisha Stone. "He smells this old cob pipe, an' that near let 'em know I was here. Well, let him come an' ask me for Lizzie! I'll soon put an end to this foolishness!"

He shook his clenched fist toward a distant light that he knew shone from the window of the Bunker place and then moved away toward his own house, savagely cleaving the stem of his old cob with his teeth.

Having passed about half the distance to the house, he halted, for a familiar odor had assailed his nostrils.

"That damned old well!" he growled wrathfully. "I'd just like to know what makes it smell so!"

He changed his course and approached the spot where he had endeavored to strike water by boring deep into the earth, but had succeeded only in spending a considerable sum of money. As he came nearer the odor became stronger, and when he was quite close to the well he could scarcely endure it. He also noticed something he had never noted before. A strange whistling sound came from the well.

"Well, that thing beats all water. It's a regular hoodoo!" He had it plugged up anyhow, an' we'll begin on it next Monday."

When he reached the house, he found his wife sitting by a dim light in the dining room, her knitting dropped in her lap. In a moment he realized by her attitude that something was troubling her.

"What is it, mother?" he asked.

Without a word she took a long envelope from a stand at her elbow and handed it to him. The light showed him the familiar card of his attorney at the upper left hand corner of the envelope.

"How did you get this?" he asked, rather huskily, as he ripped open one end and drew forth the document contained within.

"The Neuman left it as he passed on his way home from town," she replied, her eyes fastened anxiously on his face.

He read it through without uttering a sound or making a sign. Then he went out into the night once more, and for nearly an hour he was absent. When he returned, she was sitting just as he left her.

"Mandy," he said, his voice steady and hard, "I'm beat. The judge has decided there's not enough evidence to reopen the case, an' the lawyer can't find ground for a new suit. Jed Bunker has beat me."

The Fourth came and brought with it Richard Bunker to ask for Lizzie's hand in marriage. Elisha Stone had been holding his feelings in check since receiving the letter from his lawyer, but now the full torrent of his wrath was turned on the young man.

"I'll see Lizzie dead before she shall marry a Bunker!" he shouted. "An' you ever meet her down the lane agin' I'll shoot ya sure as there's a heaven! Got off my land! This is my answer, an' you'll find I mean it! You're the son of a scoundrel, an'—"

"Stop!" came from the young man's lips. "I will go immediately, but you must not call my father a scoundrel again."

He read it through without uttering a sound.

In my hearing. Some day you will realize you are in the wrong. Good day, sir. The unfortunate lover rode away with dignity, watched out of sight by the trembling object of his affections, who was hidden behind the curtain of an upper window.

Elisha Stone sought to relieve his feelings by entering heartily into the celebra-

tion he had planned to be carried out by his two boys. From his little blacksmith shop he brought two anvils, and with plenty of powder and fuse he made them boom forth like a cannon, and all day long he thus thundered defiance from the slope to his neighbor and enemy who lived in the finer house down the road. The stars and stripes fluttered from a flag-staff he had erected in the yard, and passing people imagined the hearts of the farmer and his family were filled to overflowing with patriotism.

When night came, a considerable number of young people, with not a few older ones, assembled at the Stone farm to wit-

ness the display of fireworks, for it had been reported that Elisha's boys were going to make a regular spread. Every one about, excepting the Bunkers, had been invited in a general way, and while awaiting darkness, confectionery, fruit, ice cream and lemonade were served in generous quantities.

Elisha was everywhere, and he had never before seemed so jolly and sociable. He appeared to be enjoying everything like a boy, and the people who had known him as a rather quiet, reserved and stern man were astonished at his manner.

At length the time for the display of fireworks arrived, and the visitors assembled at the back of the house, where they could sit on a grassy slope and enjoy the spectacle. The boys had carried the box of fireworks down near the hoodoo well, where everything had been prepared for sending them off.

The first rocket sailed into the air with a graceful curve, a cheer breaking from the lips of the spectators as it burst and sent forth many colored balls that floated lightly away and finally faded. Then Elisha, who had slipped away a few moments before, came back and sat down just in time to be on hand when the anvil, which he had loaded with an extra heavy charge, gave a roar that shook the ground and broke a dozen panes of glass in the windows of the house.

"Hurrah!" cried the old farmer, in genuine delight, as he heard the jingle of the glass as it rattled from his windows, accompanied by little screams of terror from the women and girls in the party—"hurrah for the Fourth of July!"

Up into the sky hissed another rocket, and yet another, and then—No one could tell how it came about, but a freshly lighted pinwheel flew from its pivot and went sizzling and spluttering right into the well. The next instant a column of fire shot upward from the mouth of the well with a rushing sound, and the invited spectators clapped their hands with delight, for they fancied Elisha had prepared an amazing and novel surprise for them.

The former himself, however, sat staring at this unexpected display in utter bewilderment, and he did not arouse himself until one of his boys, who came running up from the field, shook him by the shoulder, crying:

"Father, father, the well's afire!"

"Well, what makes her burn?" he asked amazedly. "The old thing smelled bad enough to burn, but—"

"Stone," broke in a neighbor, "that looks to me like a burning jet of natural gas! If so, your fortune is made. Your celebration has proved a fortunate one, and your hoodoo well is good as a gold mine."

In the midst of the excitement Jeduthin Bunker appeared and presented himself before Elisha, saying:

"Mr. Stone, I have the pleasure of informing you that Noah Jackson has been arrested and is on his way here in custody of a detective. If you do not recover your money, you will see him properly punished."

"Jackson—arrested? By a detective? Who sent a detective after him?"

"I did, sir. I was determined to clear

myself of any suspicion in this matter. Here is the dispatch received from my detective notifying me he has secured my man." And the message was placed in Elisha's unsteady fingers. When he had read it by the light of the burning well, he muttered rather dazedly:

"Well, this has certainly been the greatest Fourth of July I ever saw in all my born days!"

The "hoodoo well" did prove a gold mine. It was "plugged" to extinguish the fire, and then a syndicate came along and bought the Stone farm for a fabulous sum, after which they proceeded to bore other wells and conduct the gas to town.

Noah Jackson was tried and convicted, which removed the last vestige of suspicion against Bunker from the mind of Elisha, who acknowledged his mistake and gave the consent asked for to the marriage of Dick and Lizzie.

To this day nothing gives Elisha greater delight than to sit with a well filled pipe and relate the story of that wonderful Fourth. He has told it a thousand times, but he is just as ready to repeat it today as he was on the second occasion.

GILBERT PATTEN.

#### ON THE FOURTH.

Love, Romance and Why He Was Never Married.

Jack sat on the piazza smoking a cigar. I joined him. A parcel of mothers were gathered together in the front yard watching their respective kids, five of whom belonged to Jack. They were making a perfect racket. Pinwheels swished against the blackened gastopods, powder crackers spit and snapped, skyrockets banged through the air, and the youngsters squealed with delight. Now and then a frightened "Oh!" from one of the mothers could be heard above the din.

"What are you laughing at, Pete?" said Jack as I threw my head back and gave vent to the most uproarious laughter.

"Well, to tell the truth," said I to my innocent companion, "I was thinking of a Fourth of July experience I once had with an auburn haired girl," and I again laughed.

"Fire away," said Jack very appropriately.

"Well, you see," answered I, "a new girl came to visit my cousin Jane. I was completely gone in half an hour after the introduction. I invited her to go sailing on the night of the glorious Fourth. A fine lunch I stowed away in the bow of the boat. Roman candles and skyrockets lay cuddled together in the stern, and powder crackers by the package were there. That evening arrived. Opposite me in the stanch Clarissa sat the witching girl. Her eyes were bright, her cheeks pink, and her intoxicating auburn bang would have knocked an artist dead on the spot. After an hour or so of small talk verging awfully near the will you be mine period I thought I would frighten her just a little bit, so that I might console and pet her afterward, so I set off a firecracker under the seat on which she was sitting. Gloriana Johnson! With a noise like a rebel yell she shot up two feet in the air, blasphemous, and dropped into the water with a thud that denationalized my soul. She arose to the surface. I made a dive for her and just reached her hair. I clutched it, and the struggling owner dropped again to the bottom, leaving the wig in my hand. I soon again observed an object shining in the moonlight, and I grabbed her just in time. I hauled her into the boat and gave her my handkerchief with which to mop her face. She clapped it on her head in a jiffy and tied it under her chin. I then flipped the wig toward her. It landed on the overturned lunchbox. Such a mess! Divorced slices of bread and ham lay strewn in the bottom of the much bedraggled Clarissa. Cookies swollen to twice their normal size decorated the sides of the sarsaparilla bottles. The edam cheese that I prided myself on rolled hither and thither among the other stuff like something demented. Not a word was spoken between us. Mutually shocked, we sat like mummies. I landed her at the boat-house, and as she stepped upon the boards she turned and said, 'For heaven's sake, Mr. Waterman, if you have any charity in your heart, any honor in your soul, swear that you will never divulge what has happened this evening.' She looked so drizzily, faded out and weebegone I promised faithfully never to speak of it to a human soul, and of course I never have."

Jack looked at me curiously for a moment, then he said:

"My, my, that's the reason, then, you'd never get married!"

He knew.



Agent—I want to put your name down for my little book, "What Can Be Done With Fireworks," for the Fourth.

Householder—It won't tell me what I don't already know. You see that pile of envelopes?

Agent—Yes.

Householder—Well, those envelopes are bills for damages. They tell what can be done with fireworks.

The old fashioned "chasers," the kind that used to make the girls giggle and scream and scold their little brothers 50 years ago, are still in the ring and are as erratic in their movements as ever. Next to a pinwheel the chaser is close to the heart of the American small boy. When he outgrows the pinwheel and chaser, the tail feathers will drop from the proud bird of freedom, and Uncle Sam will wear a derby hat.

Three Fourth of July Thoughts.

The only security for all is a free press. We owe gratitude to France, Justice to England, good will to all, subservience to none.

The execution of the laws is more important than the making of them.—Thomas Jefferson.

#### FITS AND NERVOUS DISEASES.

When Henry M. Hall, M. D., late surgeon U. S. A., Department of Tennessee, returned from the war he found a child afflicted with epilepsy. Leading physicians were consulted, without apparent benefit. Stated specialists could do but little if any relief. To rescue his child from a fate worse than death became the object of his life. For several years experiment followed experiment, until at last success crowned his efforts. In 1899 old age and infirmities induced him to impart the knowledge of how to manufacture it, under the agreement that a bottle should be sent free of all charges to any one applying for it, who was afflicted with epilepsy. Since then over 20,000 free bottles have been sent to the afflicted. Experience has proved that it cures Insomnia, St. Vitus Dance, and all forms of Nervous Affliction. If you want to try this wonderful remedy free of all charge, write, stating your disease as plainly as possible, give your age and post office. Address: The Hall Chemical Co., West Philadelphia, Pa.

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